

Who Decides What?

Compare local and state government structures, jobs, and decision making.

SS.4.CG.3.2 "Compare the structure, functions, and processes of local and state government."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show who makes decisions at each level of government. Circle local or state jobs, then number the steps in each decision-making process.

Government Close By and Farther Away

- ① In Pine Harbor, the local government is close to daily life. Voters elect city council members and a mayor. In nearby areas outside the city, voters elect county commissioners. These local leaders make decisions for their own community. They may maintain parks, collect trash, support police and fire services, and set local rules called ordinances. A city or county government serves a smaller area than a state government.
- ② State government serves everyone in the state. Its structure includes a legislature, a governor, and state courts. The legislature makes state laws, the governor carries out laws, and courts decide cases about laws. State leaders handle matters that reach across many communities, such as state highways, driver licenses, and public school rules. The state government can also make rules that local governments must follow.
- ③ Both levels use elected leaders, laws, meetings, and votes to solve problems. At a city council meeting, people can share ideas before council members vote on an ordinance. At the state level, a proposed law, called a bill, is considered and voted on by the legislature. If it passes, the governor may sign it into law. Local and state governments work together when their decisions affect the same people.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How is the structure of local government different from the structure of state government?

2 Name one job of local government and one job of state government. How is the area each level serves different?

3 Compare how a local ordinance and a state law can be decided.

4 According to the passage, how can a state government decision affect a local government?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Create two realistic government decisions, one local and one state. For each row, name the leaders involved and explain the process they could use to make the decision.

DECISION	LOCAL OR STATE?	LEADERS INVOLVED	PROCESS

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that show who makes decisions at each level of government. Circle local or state jobs, then number the steps in each decision-making process. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How is the structure of local government different from the structure of state government?	Local government may include a city council and mayor or county commissioners. State government includes a legislature, governor, and state courts.
2	Name one job of local government and one job of state government. How is the area each level serves different?	Local government may maintain parks, collect trash, or support police and fire services. State government may handle highways, driver licenses, or school rules. Local government serves a smaller community, while state government serves the whole state.
3	Compare how a local ordinance and a state law can be decided.	For a local ordinance, people may share ideas at a city council meeting before council members vote. For a state law, the legislature considers and votes on a bill, and the governor may sign it if it passes.
4	According to the passage, how can a state government decision affect a local government?	The state government can make rules that local governments must follow.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

DECISION	LOCAL OR STATE?	LEADERS INVOLVED	PROCESS
Repair a neighborhood park	Local	City council members and mayor	Residents share ideas at a council meeting. Council members vote on a plan to maintain the park.
Set a driver license rule	State	Legislature and governor	The legislature considers and votes on a bill. If it passes, the governor may sign it into law.

Accept accurate local examples involving community services and accurate state examples involving statewide matters. For the process column, students should connect local decisions to a council meeting and vote, and state laws to a legislative bill, vote, and possible governor signature.